

MAR 11 1998Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
)
The Development of Operational, Technical, and)
Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State) WT Docket No. 96-86
and Local Public Safety Agency Communications)
Requirements Through the Year 2010)

To: The Commission

**EX PARTE COMMENTS OF
THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT,
AND THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

The County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department hereby submit the following written *ex parte* comments in response to the Commission's Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.¹

The County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department ("ISD") is charged with the management of public safety radio communications systems utilized by agencies of the County. ISD maintains County public safety voice and data radio communications systems in all frequency bands, with approximately 1,600 base stations and 23,000 mobile/portable radios. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is one of the nation's largest law enforcement agencies, with communications networks that currently include 6,680 portable radios, 1,767 mobile voice radios, and 1,574 mobile data terminals.

¹ The formal comment period in this proceeding closed on January 26, 1998. Therefore these comments are being submitted as an permitted written *ex parte* communications pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules. 47 C.F.R. §1.1206.

The Commission should move quickly to resolve the issues in this proceeding and to set in place rules and procedures for the assignment of 24 MHz of public safety frequencies in the 746-806 MHz band through a regional planning process. The Los Angeles area is one of the most spectrum-congested regions in the nation, and was the model for studies by the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee that led to the spectrum allocation recommendations being implemented in part in this proceeding. While only a small portion of the 24 MHz will be available for immediate public safety use in Los Angeles, due to the presence of existing and interim digital television broadcast stations, the spectrum could address some short-term requirements and, in the long-run, will be critical for overall public safety communications in Southern California.

The most appropriate, and most expedient, process for assigning the new spectrum is through regional planning. A similar process has been used with great success in the 821 MHz band. Due in part to the presence of incumbent and new digital television stations, planning the use of the 746-806 MHz public safety spectrum in Southern California will be extremely complex, with unique regional issues. The extraordinary pent-up demand for channels, the unusual frequency propagation characteristics of the Southern California Coast, and the impact of the dominant mountain ranges in the region will also pose special problems requiring planning on a regional basis. State-wide or national planning will not accomplish that task.

There is a critical need for technical and financial support for the regional planning committees. The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO), the coordinator for current 800 MHz public safety frequencies, has indicated that it is prepared to provide substantial support for regional planning of the 746-806 MHz

band, if it designated as the frequency coordinator. APCO's proposal has considerable merit, and is far preferable to the chaos that would occur if other, smaller coordinators are also involved in the process. ISD and the Sheriff's Department have been very satisfied with APCO's coordination of other public safety frequencies, and believe that it is well-qualified to provide fair and efficient coordination of the new spectrum.

The County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department urge the Commission to move quickly to adopt rules in this proceeding consistent with that set forth above.

Respectfully submitted,

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES INTERNAL
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

By: *Garrett Mayer jr*
Garrett Mayer
Chief, Regulatory Affairs

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S
DEPARTMENT

By: *Barbara Persten jr*
Captain Barbara Persten
Commander, Communications and Fleet
Management Bureau

Of Counsel:

Robert M. Gurss
WILKES, ARTIS, HEDRICK & LANE
Chartered
1666 K Street, N.W. #1100
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 457-7329

March 11, 1998